

METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

TRANSPORTATION 2035

GENERAL FOCUS GROUP: PARTICIPANTS RECRUITED FROM RANDOM PHONE POLL

MAY 8, 2008

SANTA CLARA COUNTY: CITY OF SAN JOSE

Planning for future transportation needs: The 11 participants of the San Jose focus group strongly advocated alternative transportation, such as expanding bus and rail service and adding bike lanes and walking paths. As a result, they largely argued that investment in new alternative transportation systems should take priority in planning for the region's future transportation needs. That said, a majority of the participants reported that they rely almost exclusively on driving, which made for an interesting discussion on the changes that are needed to make public transportation their preferred mode of transit.

| | |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------|
| Maintain the existing system of roads, and the existing bus, rail and ferry services in the region. | 1 |
| Build new roads and add more bus, rail and ferry services in the region. | 9 |
| DK/NA | 1 |

The participants' allocation of funds from the \$30 billion dollar budget reflected a more balanced view of the maintenance of existing systems versus the construction of new systems. Overall, 8 out of 11 participants indicated that they would spend up to 50 percent of the funds on maintenance projects. The group reported that although several of the highways are adequately maintained, other maintenance is overdue and city streets are in poor condition. Additionally, the participants who have recently used public transportation reported that bus services are in need of maintenance.

| | |
|--------------------------------------------|----------|
| up to 25 % (\$7.5 billion dollars) | 2 |
| up to 50 % (\$15 billion dollars) | 8 |
| up to 75 % (\$22.5 billion dollars) | 1 |
| 100 % (\$30 billion dollars) | 0 |

With the funds that remain from the \$30 billion dollar budget, the participants reported that they would invest in the following: education campaigns to encourage alternative transportation (1), expanding bus services (4) and light rail services (7), expanding roads to add additional carpool and hybrid lanes (2), creating a network of bike and pedestrian corridors (5), and projects to add landscaping and "beautify" highway systems (1).

Congestion relief: The participants uniformly agreed that traffic congestion would be worse in the future if the funds under discussion were only spent to maintain existing transportation systems.

| | |
|------------------------|----------|
| Much better | 0 |
| Somewhat better | 0 |
| No change | 0 |
| Somewhat worse | 4 |
| Much worse | 7 |

The participants' priorities for reducing traffic congestion supported the earlier discussion on how they would allocate funds. A majority of the participants prioritized investments in public transit options or walking paths and bicycle lanes. The two participants who prioritized investments in the highway system argued that expansion projects are inevitable with residents' strong reliance on driving, and that residents' do not use the current public transportation system to capacity so additional investments would be a waste of resources.

| | |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------|
| Highway systems to relieve traffic congestion, including ramp metering, high-occupancy toll lanes, etc. | 2 |
| Public transit options, including rail and buses to provide alternatives to driving. | 8 |
| Walking paths and bicycle lanes to provide alternatives to driving | 1 |

At this point in the discussion, 9 of the 11 participants reported that they use their vehicle for 75 percent or more of their travel. The participants reported that the following changes would have to take place to make public transit a more viable option for them: "more rides," "more access, more coverage," "more coverage, quicker, more stops," "more efficient with fewer transfers," "quicker to get from A to B," "fewer stops on a route," "safer buses," "more efficient – too many stops and transfers," and "more parking at the station." The participants discussed that alternative transportation systems will have to be in place to accommodate future growth, and that current transportation behaviors should not be used to justify further investments in transportation systems that support individual drivers.

These participants favored options that would take trucks off roads – either by limiting the hours of travel or building dedicated truck lanes.

| | |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------|
| Keep trucks out of the peak commuter hours | 6 |
| Allow smaller trucks to use carpool lanes during congested periods for a fee | 2 |
| Encourage more cargo deliveries be made by rail or ferries | 1 |
| Build exclusive truck lanes supported by trucking fees | 3 |
| Provide more truck parking in commercial business areas | 0 |

Attitudes toward focused growth: Although 6 participants prioritized transportation funding to communities that build housing along public transit lines, the remaining participants viewed this system as unfair to their established neighborhoods.

| | |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------|
| Funds to communities that are planning to build more housing along BART and other public transit lines | 6 |
| Funds evenly to communities regardless of where they are planning to build homes | 5 |

Providing transit access: In the discussion of public transit fares two of the participants argued that fares are too high to make cost an incentive for using public transportation. When asked whether they would change the current system of discounted transit fares, only two participants favored a change to the system to base discounts on household income. The participants suggested an alternative program where residents donate the discounted transit passes that they receive from their employer and programs sponsored by other agencies.

Emissions reduction: Similar to their previous responses, a majority of the Santa Clara County participants prioritized reducing tailpipe emissions and encouraging alternatives to driving as a means of reducing automobile emissions. One participant noted that this option would have the overall effect of reducing traffic congestion for the drivers who remain on the road, and a majority of the participants agreed with this observation. The three participants who argued for improving traffic flow found this method to be better aligned with residents' current transportation habits. Contrary to the comments of Santa Rosa participants, these participants did not view traffic congestion to be an adequate incentive to ride public transportation. The San Jose participants suggested that an efficient public transportation system would have to be in place or residents will continue to cope with traffic congestion.

| | |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------|
| Reducing tailpipe emissions and encouraging alternatives to driving, such as public transit, bicycling, walking, etc. | 8 |
| Reducing traffic congestion and improving traffic flow to make it easier to drive around the Bay area | 3 |

The participants suggested a variety of transportation programs to reduce automobile emissions. The suggestions included the following: using solar cells for traffic lights and metering lights, providing information on public transit to residents, making local bus stops more comfortable and cleaning up local buses, and offering carpool stickers to hybrid vehicle owners. The group also suggested that an efficient, public-transit trip planner and real-time traffic information should be available in the Bay area. The moderator discussed the information offered by 511.org, and many of the participants had never heard of the website or telephone system.

Final thoughts on maintenance versus expansion projects: Maintenance remained a balanced priority of the group, and they expressed the need to reserve funds for projects to expand alternative transportation options in the Bay area. Overall, one participant indicated that he would spend less on maintenance than at the beginning of the discussion, and one participant indicated that he would spend more. The other nine participants allocated the same amount to maintenance as they did at the beginning of the discussion. Compared to maintenance, the following projects were rated as an equal or higher priority: encouraging new housing development near public transit (1), expanding bike lanes and walking paths (1), reducing the

cost of transit fares for all residents (2), increasing public transit services (2), reducing automobile emissions (2), and various projects to reduce traffic congestion (3).

| | |
|--------------------------------------------|----------|
| up to 25 % (\$7.5 billion dollars) | 3 |
| up to 50 % (\$15 billion dollars) | 6 |
| up to 75 % (\$22.5 billion dollars) | 2 |
| 100 % (\$30 billion dollars) | 0 |